

BEYOND THE BREAKERS AND OTHER POEMS

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



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GEORGE STERLING



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BEYOND THE BREAKERS
AND OTHER POEMS

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BY
GEORGE STERLING

AUTHOR OF

"THE TESTIMONY OF THE SUNS"

"A WINE OF WIZARDEY"

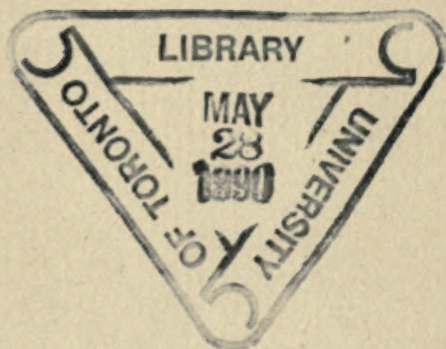
"THE HOUSE OF ORCHIDS"

A. M. ROBERTSON
SAN FRANCISCO
1914

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BY GEORGE STERLING



THE BLAIR-MURDOCK CO.

TO
MY FATHER AND MY MOTHER

CONTENTS

	PAGE
BEYOND THE BREAKERS	9
THE MASTER MARINER	15
THE VOICE OF THE DOVE	17
NIGHT SENTRIES	19
THE MUSE OF THE INCOMMUNICABLE.....	23
THE COMING SINGER	24
AT THE GRAND CANYON	25
NIGHTFALL	26
ODE ON THE CENTENARY OF THE BIRTH OF ROBERT BROWNING.....	27
AFTERWARD	36
"TIDAL, KING OF NATIONS"	37
THE LAST MONSTER	42
CHRISTMAS UNDER ARMS	43
WAR	47
ASCENSION	50
THE THIRST OF SATAN	51
SCRUTINY	52
BALLAD OF TWO SEAS	53
BALLAD OF ST. JOHN OF NEPOMUK	57
THE RACK	61
WILLY PITCHER	65
"BEYOND THE SUNSET"	67
RESPITE	71
KINDRED	72
"THAT WALK IN DARKNESS"	73
IN THE MARKET PLACE	74
THE PALETTE	77
THE HUNTING OF DIAN	79
A WINTER DAWN	83
A WINTER SUNSET	84
FORENOON BY THE PACIFIC	85

	PAGE
A LEGEND OF THE DOVE	86
SAID THE WIND	88
THE MISSION SWALLOWS	91
"OMNIA EXEUNT IN MYSTERIUM"	93
"ON A WESTERN BEACH"	96
THEN AND NOW	98
MENACE	100
THE SECRET ROOM	103
PAST THE PANES	104
FROM THE MOUNTAIN	105
DISCORD	106
LINEAGE	108
TO ONE SELF-SLAIN	109
NIGHT ON THE MOUNTAIN	110
THE ABANDONED FARM	111
TO H. G. WELLS	114
"CAELI ENARRANT"	116
"YOU NEVER CAN TELL"	119
DAWN FROM A WESTERN MOUNTAIN	121
THE SETTING	123
THE SLEEPERS	124
THE SLEEP OF BIRDS	126
SPRING IN MONTEREY	128
THE LAST DAYS	130
NATURAL HISTORY ITEMS:	
FATER COYOTE	132
THE LAGOON	134
RELATIVITY	136
THE PLAINT OF THE COTTONTAILS	137
A POSSIBILITY	140

BEYOND THE BREAKERS

BEYOND THE BREAKERS

TO JAMES HOPPER.

The world was full of the sound of a great wind out
of the West,

And the tracks of its feet were white on the trampled
ocean's breast.

And I said, "With the sea and wind I will mix my
body and soul,

Where the breath of the planet drives and the herded
billows roll."

And down through the pines I went, to the shore-
sands warm and white,

Till I saw from the ocean's verge the gulls in shriek-
ing flight,—

Till the wind was sharp in my face, and pure and
strong in its sweep

From the smokeless dome of the world and a thous-
and leagues of the deep.

BEYOND THE BREAKERS

The breakers rose before me where the hard, wet
sands were grey—

Each in its colored robe, fronting the new-born day;
The singing waves of the sea, clean beyond all of
clean,

Beautiful, swift, alive, undulant, apple-green.

Who shall grapple with lions or wrestle with
seraphim?

Even so can the surf come forth in its power to him—
Legion crying to legion, hurled to the steadfast shore;
Rampart answering rampart, where the flame-shaped
summits roar.

And I flung me forth at their strength, at their might
of motion and sound,

Till the foam-bolts stung my brow and the foam-
chains ringed me around,

And the hissing ridges ran like dragons driven by
gods—

Mad with the battle-cries and their unseen lashes and
rods.

BEYOND THE BREAKERS

From fighting nostrils to feet the ocean clad me in
cold,
Tingling, thrilling and sweet, a raiment none could
behold,
As I rose with urging of arms to the shattered foam-
crests' rain,
To look far over the deep and sink from the wind
again.

O hills of voices and snows, O valleys of sapphire and
calm,
That smote and wrenched and released to moments
of respite and balm!
Splendid, young and eternal, from bridals of wind
and sea,
Tho I sleep at last in your vaults, yet first ye shall
war with me!

Furious, swift, they came, the pulse and surge of the
deep,

BEYOND THE BREAKERS

Rank on rank in their beauty, poised for the shore-
ward leap,
Lifting my form in crystal to gaze out over the
West,—
Grasping in sudden wrath at limbs and loins and
breast.

Then was it as tho companions, godlike, alert, unseen,
Swam under and at my sides, with sight unerring and
keen,
Touching, splashing and laughing (and I hear their
laughter still),
Where the foam shot sudden veils in the waters torn
and chill.

And I shouted to them in kinship, in ocean ardor and
love,
Lifting an arm to the sun and the azure far above,—
Mixing my voice with their's and the sea-wind's
lordly song,—

BEYOND THE BREAKERS

Feeling them stir about me, the swimmers happy and strong.

Felt I not with them, the invisible at mirth,
The wind and wonder of life, the thrill and union of earth?—

More intimate, more sure, for the sea's high loneliness,
Than the blinded sages dream, or the land-bound people guess.

The great embrace of ocean was closer than love's can be;

Its clasp was sharp on my limbs, yet went I supple and free.

The breast of the deep upheaved as a mother's under a child—

Terrible, tender, strong, imperial, undefiled.

BEYOND THE BREAKERS

So for a space I lived with life intense and aware,
Far from the human swarm and mortal folly and
care—

I, the foam of earth, assoiled by the ocean-foam,
I, the homeless of worlds, forgetting the dream of
Home.

Yet in the end it was earth that called me in from the
vast,
Till the salt, wild waters boiled and the spray was
thin on the blast,
And the undertow swept out, laughing at strength like
mine,
Till I rode to shore on a wave that stung with its
hurtled brine.

Carmel, California.

THE MASTER MARINER

My grandsire sailed three years from home,
And slew unmoved the sounding whale:
Here on a windless beach I roam
And watch far out the hardy sail.

The lions of the surf that cry
Upon this lion-colored shore
On reefs of midnight met his eye:
He knew their fangs as I their roar.

My grandsire sailed uncharted seas,
And toll of all their leagues he took:
I scan the shallow bays at ease,
And tell their colors in a book.

THE MASTER MARINER

The anchor-chains his music made
And wind in shrouds and running-gear:
The thrush at dawn beguiles my glade,
And once, 'tis said, I woke to hear.

My grandsire in his ample fist
The long harpoon upheld to men:
Behold obedient to my wrist
A grey gull's-feather for my pen!

Upon my grandsire's leathern cheek
Five zones their bitter bronze had set:
Some day their hazards I will seek,
I promise me at times. Not yet.

I think my grandsire now would turn
A mild but speculative eye
On me, my pen and its concern,
Then gaze again to sea—and sigh.

THE VOICE OF THE DOVE

Hear I the mourning-dove,
As now the swallow floats
Low o'er the shadowed oats?
Soft as the voice of love,
Hear I her slow and supplicating notes?

O fugitive! O lone!
O burden pure and strong
That summer noons prolong!
O link in music shown
Between the silence and an angel's song!

The dulcimer and lute
Hoard not so swoonless woe.
What grief of long ago
Would now thy tones transmute
To what we sought afar and could not know?

THE VOICE OF THE DOVE

Thy yearnings yet elude
Our quest and scrutiny,
Tho mortals echo thee
Thy moan in solitude
For dreams that are not nor shall ever be.

So broken waters hold
A voice to sorrow set,—
A world's foreknown regret,
Immutable, untold.
So seas remember, tho our souls forget.

NIGHT-SENTRIES

Ever, as sinks the day on sea or land,
 Called or uncalled you take your kindred posts.
At helm and lever, wheel and switch you stand,
 On the world's wastes and melancholy coasts.
 Strength to the patient hand!
To all, alert and faithful in the night,
 May there be Light!

Now roars the wrenching train along the dark:
 How many watchers guard the barren way,
In signal-towers, at stammering keys, to mark
 What word the whispering horizons say!
 To all that see and hark,—
To all, alert and faithful in the night,
 May there be Light!

NIGHT-SENTRIES

On ruthless streets, on by-ways sad with sin,
 (Half hated by the blinded ones you guard)
Guard well, lest crime unheeded enter in!
 The dark is cruel and the vigil hard.
 The hours of guilt begin.
To all, alert and faithful in the night,
 May there be Light!

Now reels the pulsing hull adown the sea:
 Gaze onward, anxious eyes, to mist or star!
Where foams the heaving highway wide and free?
 Where wait the reef, the berg, the cape, the bar?
 Whatever menace be,
To all, alert and faithful in the night,
 May there be Light!

Now the surf-rumble rides the midnight wind,
 And grave patrols are at the ocean-edge.
Now soars the rocket where the billows grind,
 Discerned too late, on sunken shoal or ledge.

NIGHT-SENTRIES

To all that seek and find,—
To all, alert and faithful in the night,
May there be Light!

On lonely headlands gleam the lamps that warn,
Star-steady, or a-blink like dragon-eyes.
Govern your rays, or wake the giant horn
Within the fog that welds the sea and skies!
Far distant runs the morn:
To all, alert and faithful in the night,
May there be Light!

Now glow the lesser lamps in rooms of pain,
Where nurse and doctor watch the joyless breath,
Drawn in a sigh, and sighing lost again.
Who waits without the threshold, Life or Death?
Reckon you loss or gain?
To all, alert and faithful in the night,
May there be Light!

NIGHT-SENTRIES

Honor to you that guard our welfare now!

To you that constant in the past have stood!

To you by whom the future shall avow

Unconquerable fortitude and good!

Upon the sleepless brow

Of each, alert and faithful in the night,

May there be Light!

THE MUSE OF THE INCOMMUNICABLE

An echo often have our singers caught,
And they that bend above the saddened strings;
One hue of all the hundred on her wings
Our painters render, and our men of thought
In realms mysterious her face have sought
And glimpsed its marvel in elusive things.
Her fragrance gathers and her shadow clings
To all the loveliness that man hath wrought.

The wind of lonely places is her wine.
Still she eludes us, hidden, husht and fleet,
A star withdrawn, a music in the gloom.
Beauty and death her speechless lips assign,
Where silence is, and where the surf-loud feet
Of armies wander on the sands of doom.

THE COMING SINGER

The Veil before the mystery of things
 Shall stir for him with iris and with light;
 Chaos shall have no terror in his sight
Nor earth a bond to chafe his urgent wings;
With sandals beaten from the crowns of kings
 Shall he tread down the altars of their night,
 And stand/ with Silence on her breathless height,
To hear what song the star of morning sings.

With perished beauty in his hands as clay,
 Shall he restore futurity its dream.
Behold! his feet shall take a heavenly way
 Of choric silver and of chanting fire,
Till in his hands unshapen planets gleam,
 'Mid murmurs from the Lion and the Lyre.

AT THE GRAND CANON

Thou settest splendors in my sight, O Lord!
It seems as tho a deep-hued sunset falls
Forever on these Cyclopean walls,—
These battlements where Titan hosts have warred,
And hewn the world with devastating sword,
And shook with trumpets the eternal halls
Where seraphim lay hid by bloody palls
And only Hell and Silence were adored.

Lo! the abyss wherein great Satan's wings
Might gender tempests, and his dragons' breath
Fume up in pestilence. Beneath the sun
Or starry outposts on terrestrial things,
Is no such testimony unto Death
Nor altars builded to Oblivion.

NIGHTFALL

Pure and argent, westward far,
Burns a solitary star,

Trembling as in doubt
If to linger, if to go.

Now the blunt-faced owls are out,
Soft of wing as falling snow.

Now the moth awakes to be
Part of evening's sorcery—

White as firstling foam.
'Ware thee, witch's butterfly!
Dryad mists from woodlands roam
On her hidden rites to spy.

Feel ye not the twilight-awe?
Youngest things more closely draw
To the mother-breast:

That shall nevermore betray.
Now ye know, who sought for rest,
Why ye found it not in day.

ODE ON THE CENTENARY OF THE
BIRTH OF ROBERT BROWNING

As unto lighter strains a boy might turn
 From where great altars burn
And Music's grave archangels tread the night,
 So I, in seasons past,
 Loved not the bitter might
 And merciless control
Of thy bleak trumpets calling to the soul.
 Their consummating blast
 Held inspirations of affright,
 As when a faun
 Hears mournful thunders roll
On breathless, wide transparencies of dawn.
 Nor would I hear
 With thee, superb and clear
The indomitable laughter of the race;
 Nor would I face

BROWNING CENTENARY ODE

Clean Truth, with her cold agates of the well,
Nor with thee trace
Her footprints passing upward to the snows,
But sought a phantom rose
And islands where the ghostly siren sings;
Nor would I dwell
Where star-forsaking wings
On mortal thresholds hide their mystery,
Nor watch with thee
The light of Heaven cast on common things.

But now in dreams of day I see thee stand
A grey, great sentry on the encompassed wall
That fronts the Night forever, in thy hand
A consecrated spear
To test the dragons of man's ancient fear
From secret gulfs that crawl—
A captain of that choral band
Whose reverend faces, anxious of the Dark,
Yet undismayed

BROWNING CENTENARY ODE

By rain of ruined worlds against the night,

Turned evermore to hark

The music of God's silence, and were stayed

By something other than the reason's light.

And I have seen thee as

An eagle, strong to pass

Where tempest-shapen clouds go to and fro

And winds and noons have birth,

But whose regard is on the lands below

And wingless things of earth.

And yet not thine for long

The feignéd passion of the nightingale,

Nor shards of haliotis, nor the song

Of cymballed fountains hidden in the dale,

Nor gardens where the feet of Fragrance steal:

'Twas thine the laying-on to feel

Of tragic hands imperious and cold,

That grasping, led thee from the dreams of old,

Making thee voyager

BROWNING CENTENARY ODE

Of seas within the cosmic solitude,
Whose moons the long-familiar stars occlude,—
 Whose living sunsets stir
With visions of the timelessness we crave.
 And thou didst ride a wave
That gathered solemn music to its breast,
And breaking, shook our strand with thought's unrest,
Till men far inland heard its mighty call
Where the young mornings leap the world's blue
 wall.

Nature hath lonely voices at her heart
 And some thou heardst, for at thine own
 Were chords beyond all Art
That thrill but to the eternal undertone.
 But not necessitous to thee
The dreams that were when Arcady began
Or Paphos soared in iris from the sea;
 For thou couldst guess

BROWNING CENTENARY ODE

The rainbows hidden in the frustrate slime,
 And sawst in crownless Man
 A Titan scourged thro Time
With pains and raptures of his loneliness.
 And thou wast wanderer
In that dim House that is the human heart,
 Where thou didst roam apart,
 Seeing what pillars were
Between its deep foundations and the sun,
 What halls of dream undone,
What seraphs hold compassionate their wings
Between the youth and bitterness of things,
 Ere all see clear
The gain in loss, the triumph in the tear.

Time's whitest loves lie radiant in thy song,
Like starlight on an ocean, for thine own
 Was as a deathless lily grown
In Paradise—ethereal and strong.
 And to thine eyes

BROWNING CENTENARY ODE

Earth had no earth that held not haughty dust,
And seeds of future harvestings in trust,
And hidden azures of eventual skies.

Yet hadst thou sharper strains,
Even as the Power determines us with pains,
And seeing harvests, sawst as well the chaff,
And seeing Beauty, sawst her shames no less,

Losing the sweet,
High thunder of thy Jovian laugh
On souls purblind in their self-righteousness.

O vision wide and keen!
Which knew, untaught, that pains to joyance are
As night unto the star

That on the effacing dawn must burn unseen.

And thou didst know what meat
Was torn to give us milk,
What countless worms made possible the silk

That robes the mind, what plan
Drew as a bubble from old infamies
And fen-pools of the past

BROWNING CENTENARY ODE

The shy and many-colored soul of man.

Yea! thou hast seen the lees
In that rich cup we lift against the day,
Seen the man-child at his disastrous play—

His shafts without a mark,
His fountains flowing downward to the dark,
His maiming and his bars,

Then turned to see
His vatic shadow cast athwart the stars,
And his strange challenge to infinity.

But who am I to speak,
Far down the mountain, of its altar-peak,
Or cross on feeble wings,
Adventurous, the oceans in thy mind?

We of a wider day's bewilderings
For very light seem blind,
And fearful of the gods our hands have formed.

Some lift their eyes and seem
To see at last the lofty human scheme

BROWNING CENTENARY ODE

Fading and toppling as a sunset stormed
By wind and evening, with the stars in doubt.
And some cry, "*On to Brotherhood!*" And some,
 (Their Dream's high music dumb) :
"*Nay! let us hide in roses all our chains,*
 Tho all the lamps go out!
 Let us accept our lords!
Time's tensions move not save to subtler pains."
And over all the Silence is as swords. . . .
Wherefore be near us in our day of choice,
 Lest Hell's red choirs rejoice;
 And may our counsels be
More wise, more kindly, for the thought of thee;
 And may our deeds attest
 Thy covenant of fame
To men of after-years that see thy name
Held like a flower by Honor to her breast.
Thy station in our hearts long since was won—
 Safe from the jealous years—
Thou of whose love, thou of whose thews and tears

BROWNING CENTENARY ODE

We rest most certain when the day is done
And formless shadows close upon the sun!
Thou wast a star ere death's long night shut down,
 And for thy brows the crown
Was graven ere the birth-pangs, and thy bed
Is now of hallowed marble, and a fane
 Among the mightier dead:
More blameless than thine own what soul hath stood?
Dost thou lie deaf until another Reign,
 Or hear as music o'er thy head
The ceaseless trumpets of the war for Good?
 Ah, thou! ah, thou!
 Stills God thy question now?

AFTERWARD

Here in the dale sweet waters grieve,
Where fountains westward sob and flow,
And I gave my Love to drink at eve
From a lily's cup of snow.

White were the stars beyond her head
As was the chalice whence she quaffed,
And wet her lips as she smiled and said
How low the waters laughed.

I have forgotten if so it seemed
In that communing dusk to me,
Tho I forget not that which we dreamed
Ere the river met the sea.

Now, O brook of the cancelled years,
I watch your vesper stream depart!
Its mourning flood is one with my tears,
And its sound is in my heart.

“TIDAL, KING OF NATIONS”

Genesis xiv : 1-17

Tidal, king of nations, is it night and silence for
thee,—

For all who smote by the slime-pits and were slain
in the valley of kings?

Come there dreams to the bed of stone which none
attaineth to see—

Mirth of thy captains, moan of thy slaves or
shadow of voiceless things?

Amraphel and Arioch and Elam's over-lord,

Hold they still the pact they held by the salt-sea's
bitter breath?

Speak they yet of the battle's range when the nine
kings drew the sword?

Beck they now for a phantom wine in the sunless
courts of Death?

"TIDAL, KING OF NATIONS"

Tidal, king of nations, the desert is seal of thy tomb;
He who breaketh that ashen seal may sell thy bones
for a price.

Thy sceptre rotteth unheld and thy chariot in the
gloom,
And the ghosts of thy gods come not to the evening
sacrifice.

There, tho the twilight deepen, no harps are sad for
thy sake;

Thou with care for thy wraths alone hast seen how
the captains fail.

Time for thy doves hath given dust, for thy melon-
vine the snake,

The bittern's cry for thy viol's voice, and the bat
for thy nightingale.

Tidal, king of nations, and traitor to each for pride,
Thou wert no wall to thy people, nor guard in a
narrow place;

"TIDAL, KING OF NATIONS"

Thy will it was on Admah and the hearths of Zoar
to ride,

Slaying beyond thy borders, till the arrow sang at
thy face.

Treasure and flocks and women, and all things fair in
thy sight,

They for thine eyes were herded—and what do
thine eyes discern?

Foeman and friend are broken, and none remaineth
to fight;

They that supped with War hath War now eaten
in turn.

Tidal, king of nations, could life be given again,

For what thy sword uplifted in the battle that
kings must use?

Would thy heart give thought to the secret of man's
unsearchable pain,

Keeping thy trust with the orphan, and the widow's
empty cruse?

"TIDAL, KING OF NATIONS"

The water-ways are broken that led to the corn and
grape:

Thy steel was to other torrents, thy steeds to
another goal.

Alas for our faithless hands that mar whatever they
shape,—

For the dusts made equal now in the palm of the
groping mole!

Tidal, king of nations, the world is weary of strife;
We stand aghast by our engines, that wait for the
trumpet's call.

Must man be brute forever and Hate be lord over
Life?

Nay! tho the midnight question, the morning
answereth all!

Still wait the fields for the sower, tho the lords of Ur
be not;

"TIDAL, KING OF NATIONS"

The heavenly roads lie open to the horses of the
sun ;
And still the mighty Hands, unchangeable, unbegot,
Test as of old the nations, till the many realms are
one.

THE LAST MONSTER

In backward vision, from the primal dusk
I saw them writhe, reptile and hornéd asp,
Lizard and hydra, serpents of the fen,
Abominable. Then the waddling bulks,
With fangs of death emergent from the slime
Primordial, rose to the light of suns.
Thereafter quaked the rank and steaming earth
To tread of mammoths, and the giant bear,
Insatiate, loomed shaggy on the night,
Contending with the tiger for his glut.
Then sprang the apes, malevolent and swift,
Upon the stage of being—part of life
That lived on life. Then a new darkness fell,
Pierced by the moans of mighty shapes that died.
Whereat the sun rose elder and austere,
And mute against the dawn, alert for death,
With engines of destruction left and right,
Scanning the skies stood the last monster, Man.

CHRISTMAS UNDER ARMS

By the star that led kings to His feet in the night of
His birth,

Put ye no trust in kings nor the mighty ones of the
earth!

Put ye no trust in prayer nor abase ye unto the
Past—

By the star of the mind alone shall your sons see clear
at last!

Who are we that we make us a feast, or say of the
years, "They are ours!"

As the lost might revel in Hell and bind their fore-
heads with flowers?

Wherefore now are we glad, when the nations toil in
their night,

Seeking them battle-music and engines grievous to
smite?

CHRISTMAS UNDER ARMS

A thousand masters are ours, and the weight of a
thousand chains;

We cease not this side death to seek new bondage and
pains.

Him that forgeth the shackles, him we acknowledge
as lord,

And darker over the burdened world falls the shadow
of the sword.

Cannon arraigneth cannon, and fort is answer to fort;
Death sits silent and masked by the cliffs and dunes
of the port;

They gird themselves in the East to the day when
their battleships go forth;

And there comes no pause in the thunder of the forges
of war in the North.

Whither, O Man! say whither may the steel-girt
highway lead!

CHRISTMAS UNDER ARMS

We have made of the past a shambles red and a place
where vultures feed.

Nay! must it ever be thus with the hope and promise
of Life—

Ever the agony, ever the waste and the hatred and
blindness of strife?

Which way we look is night, and the wind of a great
unrest

Moans on our high-built towers, and passes on to the
West.

Vague in the gloom before us move shadows vaster
than man,

And doubts lay hold on the human host and rumors
trouble our van.

Have we builded but for the flame, and sown that
Death may reap?

Shall we give our morning to murder and our noon
to eternal sleep?

CHRISTMAS UNDER ARMS

Answer, Thou who we dream dost abide in the gloom
apart!—

There is no answer, O Man! except in the silence of
thy heart!

With thee alone is the answer, and the answer is
“Love and Peace!”

Except the message be heard, the bountiful years shall
cease;

Except the message be honored, a curse shall come
to the lands

Where thou waitest on Christmas morning with a
sheathless sword in thy hands!

WAR

The night was on the world, and in my sleep
I heard a voice that cried across the dark:
"Give steel!" And gazing I beheld a red,
Infernal stithy. There were Titans five
Assembled, thewed and naked and malign
Against the glare. One to the furnace-throat,
Whence issued screams, fed shapes of human use—
The hammer, axe and plow. Those molten soon,
Another haled the dazzling ingot forth
With tongs, and gave it to the anvil. Two,
With massy sledges throbbing at the task,
Harried the gloom with unenduring stars
And poured a clangorous music on the dark,
With loud, astounding shock and counter-shock
Incessant. And the fifth colossus stood
The captain of that labor. From his form

WAR

Spread wings more black than Hell's high-altar—
ribbed

As are the vampire-bat's. The night grew old,
And I was then aware they shaped a sword. . . .

In that domain and interval of dream
'T was dawn upon the headlands of the world,
And I, appalled, beheld how men had reared
A mountain, dark below the morning star—
A peak made up of houses and of herds,
Of cradles, yokes and all the handiwork
Of man. Upon its crest were gems and gold,
Rare fabrics, and the woof of humble looms.
Harvests and groves and battlements were made
Part of its ramparts, and the whole was drenched
With oil and wine and honey. Then thereon
Men bound their sons, the fair, alert and strong,
Sparing no household. And when all were bound,
Brands were brought forth: the mount became a pyre.
Black from that red immensity of flame,

WAR

A tower of smoke, upcoiling to the sky,
Was shapen by the winds, and took the form
Of him who in the stithy gave command.
A shadow between day and men he stood;
His eyes looked forth on nothingness; his wings
Domed desolations, and the scarlet sun
Glowed thro their darkness like a seal that God
Might set on Hell forever. Then the pyre
Shrank, and he reeled. Whereat, to save that shape
Their madness had evoked in death and pain,
Men rose and made a second sacrifice.

ASCENSION

When I contemplate this mine urgent race
And see what paths its tireless feet have worn,
In silence and essential night forlorn,
To each cold peak that gives on mental space,—
Each spirit-eyrie of our time and place,
It seems a Titan toiling toward the morn,
With bloody feet and coronal of thorn,
And holding to the skies an exiled face.

Hasten, O Time, that far, atoning Day
Whose feet of fire shall quench the lesser lights,
Yet to whose music, old ere life began
And throats and harps were fashioned of the clay,
The seraphim of unconjectured nights
Shall hear stars chanting in the soul of man.

THE THIRST OF SATAN

In dream I saw the starry disarray
 (That battle-dust of matter's endless war)
 Astir with some huge passing, and afar
Beheld the troubled constellations sway
In winds of insurrection and dismay,
 Till, from that magnitude whose ages are
 But moments in the cycle of the star,
There swept a Shadow on our ghost of day—

A Shape that clutched the deviating earth
 And checked its headlong flight and held it fast,
 Draining the bitter oceans one by one.
Then, to the laughter of infernal mirth,
 The ruined chalice droned athwart the Vast,
 Hurled in the face of the offended sun.

SCRUTINY

Turn thy soul's eye on all the forms that are
And thou shalt see them but as shade and form,
Hiding an essence fathomless. The storm
Of atoms, and the sun's effulgent car,
Are but as veils and an uplifted bar
Between thyself and verity. The warm,
Assuring day, the stars' investing swarm,
Are darkness, and the mind alone a star—

An orb delivered to the night, and fain
To test the paths of timelessness, or gain
Some dim surmise of an authentic goal,—
Some rumor from the council of its lords,
In moments when the unaccepted soul
Glimpses the far-off splendor of their swords.

BALLAD OF TWO SEAS

"Wherefor thy woe these many years,
O hermit by the sea?
What is the grief the winds awake,
And waters cry to thee?"

"It was in piracy we sailed,
Great galleons to strip.
On a far day, on a far sea,
We took her father's ship.

Red-sided rocked the *Rey del Sur*
Whenas its deck we won.
I slew before her eyes divine
Her father and his son.

BALLAD OF TWO SEAS

There was no sin I had not sinned,
On deep sea and ashore;
But when I looked in those great eyes
Villain was I no more.

I captain claimed her as my prize,
Tho maids in common were.
Alone 'mid that fell company,
I cast my lot with her.

They put us in an open boat
With seven days' food and drink;
Then slipped those traitor topsails down
Beyond the ocean's brink.

Night came, and morn, but rose no sail
On that horizon-verge;
I took the oars and set our prow
Against the lessening surge.

BALLAD OF TWO SEAS

It was scant provender we had,
Tho she was unaware;
Right soon I feared, and by deceit
I gave her all my share.

She would not speak; she scarce would
look;

Her pain was past my cure.
Red-scuppered in our hells of dream
Wallowed the *Rey del Sur*.

On a far day, on a far sea,
Our shallop southward crept;
With aching arms and splitten lips
I labored—and she wept.

Dawn upon dawn, dark upon dark,
Nor ever land nor wind!
The nights were chill, the stars
were keen,
The sun swung hot and blind.

BALLAD OF TWO SEAS

Our drink and food long since were
gone. . . .

We laid us down to die. . . .
Then came a booming of a surf,
And palm-trees met mine eye.

I steered us through the broken reef;
Fainting, I won to shore;
I gazed upon her changed face,
But she on mine no more.

Below the palms I buried her
Whose bale-star I had been.
And since, by this bleak coast of snows,
I sorrow for my sin.

There was no other of our kind
That had her heavenly face.
On a far Day, by a far Sea.
I trust to know her grace."

BALLAD OF ST. JOHN OF NEPOMUK

Now to you all be Christmas cheer,
Good health and better luck!
Praise now the womb that gave to men
St. John of Nepomuk!

He stood before King Wenceslaus
With none to take his part—
Despair upon his kindly face,
But honor in his heart.

“How now, O priest!” the monarch cried,
(And death was in his smile):
“Didst shrive the faithless soul of her
Who did my bed defile?”

BALLAD OF ST. JOHN OF NEPOMUK

"Didst bid her go in peace who now
Hath left no peace to me?
Tell then the sin that thou didst shrive,
E'en as she told it thee!"

"O king!" our saint unblenching said,
"Such may I not reveal,
For priesthood's vow upon my lips
Hath set a ghostly seal.

"That seal which on my mouth is set
Forever and for aye,
Thou shalt not loose by mortal pain
Nor wrench with racks away."

They stretched his body on the rack
And there their will they wrought;
He cried in his woe to seven saints,
But not the tale they sought.

BALLAD OF ST. JOHN OF NEPOMUK

"Confess," the king in fury cried,
 "Her love as it befell,
Or steel shall cleave thy way to death
 And fire thy path to Hell!"

"O king," he said, "I will not speak,
 Tho thou in tears should kneel;
For manhood's honor on my mouth
 Hath set a mighty seal.

"And that seal set upon my mouth
 More close than life does stay:
Thou canst not break it with a sword
 Nor melt with fire away."

They wrought their will upon his flesh
 With cursing and with scoff. . . .
They gagged his mouth and from a bridge
 At last they flung him off.

BALLAD OF ST. JOHN OF NEPOMUK

They cast him into Moldau stream,
Our saint who did no wrong;
But that true mouth which told no tale
God filleth now with song.

Wherefore pray thou our new-born Lord,
And John our saint as well,
That when a fair fame thou mightst harm
No whisper thou shalt tell.

For since of her who gave him naught
He would not cause the fall,
How knightlier shalt thou guard the name
Of her who gives thee all!

THE RACK

In Hell a voice awoke,
And slowly spoke.

"Not for God's vengeance met,
Not for my torment-sweat,
Not for these agonies
Break I our silences:
Behold their pain excelled
By rapture once unheld.

In Earth's benignest land
We wandered hand in hand.
All beauty and all woe
Were her's awhile to know;
All griefs were given her,
And I sole comforter.
Slowly her love awoke

THE RACK

And like a lily broke;
But ah! to me more dear
The roses of the year,
And I would wander far
Below the crimson star.
Slow as the jasmine grows
I won her from her snows,
Telling with word and deed
My hunger and her need,
Till, all the stream unbarred,
Her blood flowed passionward.
Awhile she recked of shame,
And spoke her Saviour's name;
Awhile her saints did call,
Then promised all.

That night there could not be
The Bliss for her and me;
But soon her lord must go
Beyond the flooded Po;

THE RACK

And soon, in steel arrayed
Went forth his cavalcade;
Then turned my Sweet to me
Telling when all could be—
Ah! God of hate! who heard
Her swiftly spoken word?

'Mid unseen flowers a-bloom
We came across the gloom,
But in that garden-close
Was dark, O Death! thy rose;
And ere mad lips caressed
Or breast was hurled to breast,—
Ere broke her last appeal,
I felt his bravos' steel—
O stealthy hounds that crept
Where the low fountains wept!

So fell the eternal night
Upon our lost delight,

THE RACK

And where its horror lies
I think of Paradise;
Yet not as they that crave
The coolness of its wave—
Sweeter than all therein
The sin we could not sin!
Yea! tho infernal art
Goad the remorseful heart,
Till primacies of pain
Within this bosom reign,
First of their legion, first,
Is that unsated thirst!—
The pang of lips unkissed,
The rack of raptures missed!"

Then on that fury fell
The silences of Hell.

WILLY PITCHER

Sharon, Conn.

He is forgotten now,
And humble dust these thirty years and more—
He whose young eyes and beautiful wide brow
My thoughts alone restore.

Dead, and his kindred dead !
And none remembers in that quiet place
The slender form, the brown and faunlike head,
The gently wistful face.

And yet across the years
I see us roam among the apple-trees,
Telling our tale of boyish hopes and fears
Amid the hurried bees.

WILLY PITCHER

When I am all alone
By the eternal beauty of the sea,
Or where the mountain's eastern shade is thrown,
His face comes back to me—

A memory unsought,—
A ghost entreating, and I know not why,—
A presence that the restless winds of thought
Acknowledge with a sigh;

Till I am half content
Not any more the loneliness to know
Of him who died so young and innocent,
And ah! so long ago!

"BEYOND THE SUNSET"

Ere dawn of that grey hero did I read—

Hard Ulysses, whose oars

Followed the sunset and the winds that lead

Time's galleys to the shores

Of demigod and siren, and I said:

"Whose was the Hand that led,

And in what faith did those intrepid men

Fare forth on waters wide,

Whose western foam they should not cross again?

What hunger and what pride

Were at the helm? Surely their hearts were great

And deep their trust in Fate;

For they went not as we,

Guarded and buttressed from the hostile sea.

For they had but their arms,

A width of oak, and stronger thews than ours

"BEYOND THE SUNSET"

To brave the ocean powers
And all the deep's mysterious alarms.
What bulwark walled Ulysses from the wave?
What engines from the reef and tempest, save
The piston and the staunchions of his heart?

Aye! and a thing apart,
A thing our weaker flesh and wiser brains
Have lost, or slowly lose—the old-time trust
In One whose angels sway the hurricanes,
And whose designs make swift the mortal dust!
They had the gods, but sought for realms unknown,
But we have overthrown
Old faiths and old illusions—on our charts
Each isle of earth is shown,
But no eternal harbor for our hearts."

And still our old men fare into the West,
And still the timeless quest
Of happiness awaits us, and we go
On paths they did not know—

"BEYOND THE SUNSET"

Those men whose names are as a trumpet-blast
 From out the armored Past.
To them the deep was as infinity,
 But unto us the sea
Lies sounded and familiar, and our rule
Is over empires that the child at school
Must learn by name, but which old Ulysses
Held buried in his faith's wide mysteries.
Aye! we have sought and found, but did not find
 Something the ancient mind
Found greater than our engines and our charts—
 A trust that old-world hearts
Found equal to the tempest and the wave,—
 Something the western wind
Whispered to spirits harborless and brave,
 And sang on oceans wide:
"Fear not, for I the god am at thy side!"
 And now as men go forth
To islands of the Orient and North,

"BEYOND THE SUNSET"

Fended and sheltered from the sea's alarms,
 Something perhaps they lose—
 A sense of mighty Arms
That shield and shadow and, in some wise, use
Our journeys to a purpose not our own.
And I have dreamt I heard from the unknown
 A voice from past our years,
 A quiet voice that saith:
 "Thou, man, dost still thy fears,
And dare the sea's broad ways of toil and death
And put thy faith in keels thy strength hath planned
 And charts thy captains read.
 Yea, the great deep is spanned
And all earth's forces broken to thy need:
 Me only, child of dust,
 Thou wilt no longer trust!"

RESPITE

Noon has her drowsy kingdom in the sky.

The valley holds forever, like a shell,

An ocean-murmur, and about my dell

The pines wait dreaming, too content to sigh.

Silence has half her will, nor would I try

Another's: here a waif unsought I dwell

On whom a rainbow-land has laid her spell,—

In whom recorded memories fade or die.

Linger, O day! for at thy heart is peace;

Thine azure holds no question; ere thou cease,

To be and to be glad is to have done.

Pause in the breathless temple of thy noon,

Ere yet I drink enchantment from the moon

And watch love's star above the sunken sun!

KINDRED

Musing, between the sunset and the dark,
As Twilight in unhesitating hands
Bore from the faint horizon's underlands,
Silvern and chill, the moon's phantasmal ark,
I heard the sea, and far away could mark
Where that unalterable waste expands
In sevenfold sapphire from the mournful sands,
And saw beyond the deep a vibrant spark.

There sank the sun Arcturus, and I thought:
Star, by an ocean on a world of thine,
May not a being, born, like me, to die,
Confront a little the eternal Naught
And watch our isolated sun decline—
Sad for his evanescence, even as I?

"THAT WALK IN DARKNESS"

Not when the sun is captain of the skies,
Nor when the sapphire-dwelling moon divine
Arrows with light the battlements of pine,
Roams Lilith, she whom raptures have made wise;
But one shall see her with enchanted eyes
When starlight makes mysterious her shrine,
That whoso drinks her beauty's golden wine
Shall lose his hope and need of Paradise.

And tho the cruel vision smite him blind,
Yet more than they who mourn him is he whole
On whom her sorceries have burst in flood,—
To whom her lips are offered, that he find
Her kiss a consternation to the soul
And scarlet trumpets pealing in the blood.

IN THE MARKET-PLACE

Rev. xviii: 10-13.

In Babylon, high Babylon,
What gear is bought and sold?
All merchandise beneath the sun
That bartered is for gold:
Amber and oils from far beyond
The desert and the fen,
And wines whereof our throats are fond—
Yea! and the souls of men!

In Babylon, grey Babylon,
What goods are sold and bought?
Vesture of linen subtly spun,
And cups from agate wrought;
Raiment of many-colored silk
For some fair denizen,
And ivory more white than milk—
Yea! and the souls of men!

IN THE MARKET-PLACE

In Babylon, old Babylon,
What cargoes on the piers?
Pearls from a tepid ocean won,
And gems that are as tears;
Arrows and javelins that prevail
Against the lion's den,
And brazen chariots and mail—
Yea! and the souls of men!

In Babylon, mad Babylon,
What get you for your pence?
A moiety of cinnamon,
Of flour and frankincense;
But let the shekels in your keep
Be multiplied by ten,
And you shall purchase slaves and sheep—
Yea! and the souls of men!

In Babylon, sad Babylon,
What chattels shall invite?

IN THE MARKET-PLACE

A wife whenas your youth is done,
Or leman for a night.
Before Astarte's portico
The torches flare again;
The shadows come, the shadows go—
Yea! and the souls of men!

In Babylon, dark Babylon,
Who take the wage of shame?
The scribe and singer, one by one,
That toil for gold and fame.
They grovel to their masters' mood;
The blood upon the pen
Assigns their souls to servitude—
Yea! and the souls of men!

THE PALETTE

Here in a marshy spot that the rains have fed,
The red-winged blackbirds have built them a cup-
shaped nest,
Hid in a dark-green tussock's grassy head,
That sways an inch in the little winds from the
west.

Four are the pale-blue eggs on whose rondure lies
A circle of dots and scrawls of the ancient ink
That never has flowed from a pen—O rune that cries
More, perhaps, than we in our wisdom think!

And the Power that fashioned there the smallest dot
Is the one that sows earth's jewel-dust of flow'rs,
And lifts the dawn where the courts of hue were not,
And the sunset glow for an end of the turquoise
hours.

THE PALETTE

Seas and forests have made a gem of earth.

Seek thine opal where foaming rivers laugh
To the flowers that have their part in the waters'
mirth.

Here, O child! is the rainbow's buried half.

Unheard, unseen, the eternal Alchemist

Wakes the colors that slumber deep in their darks.
O myriad hues! and each one true to its tryst—
The gold of Arcturus' breast and that of the lark's.

THE HUNTING OF DIAN

In the silence of a midnight lost, lost forevermore,
I stood upon a nameless beach where none had been
before,
And red gold and yellow gold were the shells upon
that shore.

Lone, lone it was as a mist-enfolded strand
Set round a lake where marble demons stand—
Held like a sapphire-stone in Thibet's monstrous
hand.

And there I beheld how One stood in her grace
To hold to the stars her wet and faery face,
And on the smooth and haunted sands her footfall
had no trace.

THE HUNTING OF DIAN

White, white was she as the youngest seraph's word,
Or milk of Eden's kine or Eden's fragrant curd,
Cast in love by Eve's wan hand to her most snowy
bird.

Fair, fair was she as Venus of the sky,
And the jasmine of her breast and starlight of her
eye
Made the heart a pain and the soul a hopeless sigh.

Weak with the sight I leaned upon my sword,
Till my soul that had sighed was become an unseen
chord
For stress of music rendered to unknown things
adored.

Surely she heard, but her beauty gave no sign
To me for whom the hushed sea was odorous as
wine,—
To me for whom the voiceless world was made her
silent shrine.

THE HUNTING OF DIAN

And she sent forth her gaze to the waters of the
West,
And she sent forth her soul to the Islands of the
Blest,
Below a star whose silver throes set pearls upon her
breast.

But chill in the East brake a glory on the lands,
And she moaned like some low wave that dies on
frozen sands,
And held to her sea-lover her sweet and cruel hands.

Then rose the moon, and its lance was in her side,
And there was bitter music because in woe she cried,
Ere on the hard and gleaming beach she laid her
down and died.

I leapt to her succor, my sword I left behind;
But one low mound of opal foam was all that I could
find—

A moon-washed length of airy gems that trembled in
the wind.

THE HUNTING OF DIAN

I knelt below the stars; the sea put forth a wave;
The moon drew up the captive tides upon her shining
grave,
As far away I heard the cry her dim sea-lover gave.

A WINTER DAWN

Untouched by crimson or by gold,
 Its pure and fleeting marble rose
 Beyond the wall of eastern snows —
Ethereal, Pentelic, cold.

Its fragile towers were high and thin,
 Symbol of beauty passionless,
 Of all inviolate loveliness;
And not of earth the pearl therein—

The pearl too precious to endure,
 Seen where the heavens' ghostly shell
 Holds in its vast and sapphire cell
A nacre infinitely pure.

So the marmorean glory bleak
 Spoke of the snows of Beauty's home;
 Then that blue sea withdrew its foam,
And we that witnessed could not speak.

A WINTER SUNSET

There seems no wind in all the land.

Austere against the fading light

I see a lonely cypress stand,

As carved from steel and malachite.

Beyond, a single sea-bird flies

To gain its far and craggy home

Below the lemon-colored skies—

An ocean-islet ringed with foam.

In all the land there seems no stir

Save that of pinions westward flown.

Glad weather, fellow traveler!

To-night I also fare alone.

FORENOON BY THE PACIFIC

The winds are far away;
The sea alone hath speech.
The killdees play
In little hollows of the kelp-strewn beach.
Beyond, a wisp of fog has come to rest
Upon the mountain's breast.

Here from a western steep
I watch the sea-gull soar;
Below, the deep
Darts a white chord along the curving shore
And brims the day with thunder. At my feet
The unshaken dew's are sweet.

The hour is full of peace
Too tenderly profound
To fail or cease
At any call of lark, or ocean-sound.
Where lonely waters meet a loner sky
The winds of morning die.

A LEGEND OF THE DOVE

Soft from the linden's bough,
Unmoved against the tranquil afternoon,
Eve's dove laments her now:
"Ah, gone! long gone! shall not I find thee soon?"

That yearning in his voice
Told not to Paradise a sorrow's tale:
As other birds rejoice
He sang, a brother to the nightingale.

By twilight on her breast
He saw the flower sleep, the star awake;
And calling her from rest,
Made all the dawn melodious for her sake.

A LEGEND OF THE DOVE

And then the Tempter's breath,
The sword of exile and the mortal chain—
The heritage of death
That gave her heart to dust, his own to pain. . . .

In Eden desolate
The seraph heard his lonely music swoon,
As now, reiterate:
"Ah, gone! long gone! shall not I find thee soon?"

SAID THE WIND:

I and my brothers are ocean-born,
And the dusk-blue reaches were our home.
Joyous, hardly old as the foam,
There we ran on a crystal morn.

North and south we swung in our play,
Life and laugh of the world's unrest.
I, deserting, fled to the west,
Swift and strong on the path of the day.

Day was victor in that mad flight—
Gone with a step from the sea to land.
There, like stars upcast on the strand,
A city blazed on the fallen night.

SAID THE WIND

Thither drawn, I crept in its maze—
Trapped and bound in a tainted pit,
Sickened in caverns crimson-lit,
Blind and weak in a fevered haze.

Pride and hate and folly and death,
Hunger, madness, squalor and pain,
Toil forever the slave of Gain,
Sin that clung to its bitter breath—

Those I saw in chamber and street,
Saw blind man in his midnight go,
Ant in his joy and giant in woe,
Reaping harvests that Night should eat.

Such I saw ere my wings won free,
And I fled forth to pasture and wood;
Orchard and meadow, I find them good;
Lake and river are as the sea.

SAID THE WIND

Give me thy coolness, grass o' the sward!
Lend me your fragrance, apple and rose!
I have been where the death-flower blows;
I have stood where Sorrow is lord.

I will cleanse me now in the grove,
Slay my taint with a million leaves.
Summer comes with her elfin eyes;
Here will I slumber, wake and rove.

THE MISSION SWALLOWS

When the mating-time of the lark is near
And down in the meadow the blackbirds swing,
They come with the music and youth of the year,
Sure as the blossoms' tryst with spring.

When willow and alder don their leaves,
Up from the cloudy south they fare,
To flit all day by the Mission eaves
And build their nests in the shadow there.

O'er field and meadow, a restless throng,
They dart and swoop till the west is red,
Swift of wing and chary of song,
That the eggs be hatched and the nestlings fed.

Serra sleeps within sound of the sea,
And the flock he fathered is long since still.
Over their graves the wild, brown bee
Prowls, and the quail calls over the hill.

THE MISSION SWALLOWS

Serra is dust for a hundred years.

Dust are the ladies and lords of Spain—
Safe from sorrow and change and tears,
Where the grass is clean with the springtide rain.

Meekly they slumber, side by side,
Cross and sword to the furrow cast,
Done forever with love and pride,
And sleep, as ever, the best at last.

But over the walls that the padres laid,
The circling swallows come and go,
Still by the seasons undismayed,
Or the storms above or the dead below.

Carmel, California.

"OMNIA EXEUNT IN MYSTERIUM"

I

The stranger in my gates—lo! that am I,
And what my land of birth I do not know,
Nor yet the hidden land to which I go.
One may be lord of many ere he die,
And tell of many sorrows in one sigh,
But know himself he shall not, nor his woe,
Nor to what sea the tears of wisdom flow,
Nor why one star is taken from the sky.

An urging is upon him evermore,
And tho he bide, his soul is wanderer,
Scanning the shadows with a sense of haste
Where fade the tracks of all who went before—
A dim and solitary traveller
On ways that end in evening and the waste

II

How dumb the vanished billions who have died!

With backward gaze conjectural we wait,
And ere the invading Shadow penetrate,
The echo from a mighty heart that cried
Is made a sole memorial to pride.

From out that night's inscrutable estate
A few cold voices wander, desolate
With all that love has lost or grief has sighed.

Slaves, seamen, captains, councillors and kings,
Gone utterly, save for those echoes far!

As they before, I tread a forfeit land,
Till the supreme and ancient silence flings
Its pall between the dreamer and the star.
O desert wide! O little grain of sand!

"OMNIA EXEUNT IN MYSTERIUM"

III

As one that knew not of the sea might come
From slender sources of a mountain stream,
And, wending where the sandy shallows gleam
And boulder-strewn the stumbling waters hum
And white with haste the falling torrents drum,
Might stand in darkness at the land's extreme
And stare in doubt, where, ghostly and supreme,
Muffled in mist and night, the sea lay dumb,—
So shalt thou follow life, a downward rill
A-babble as with question and surmise,
To wait at last where no star beaconeth,
And find the midnight desolate and chill,
And face below its indecisive skies
The Consummation, mystery and death.

"ON A WESTERN BEACH"

Far out, hulls down, the ships go by;
North, south, they pass, by night or day;
There, where the ocean meets the sky,
The canvas gleams, the tall masts sway.

Intrepid, whose adventure finds
No lasting peace for sail or prow—
Unto what oceans and what winds,
O stranger ship, advancest thou?

The tempest and the night descend
In which no truthful star may warn;
There waits no beacon to befriend
Where southward looms the bitter Horn.

"ON A WESTERN BEACH"

But will is at the guarded wheel,—
Decision at the managed sail,
To hurl the javelin of thy keel
Against the billow and the gale.

The tides and winds on that design
Converge, indifferent at best;
The fog's invasion blots the sign,
Slow sinking in the midnight west.

Thou sailest by another Star—
A solemn and unsetting Fire—
That sun of purpose, high and far,
To which intrepid hearts aspire.

THEN AND NOW

Beyond the desolate expanse of plain

The sunset like a fiery menace glowed.

The bones of brutes, along the uncertain road,
Were half a year unvisited of rain.

A woman dug within the river-bed,

Eager to know if water could be found.

Her breathing filled the space with weary sound;
On those gaunt arms and face the light lay red.

The turbid water gathered in the hole.

Pausing, she watched the west with steady stare. . . .

Impatiently the oxen sniffed the air,
Tethered and tired beside the wagon-pole.

Above, a hungry child began to push

Aside the canvas of their prairie-van;

Near the low bank a grim, impatient man
Tugged, grunting, at a thick and withered bush.

THEN AND NOW

It snapped. He rolled, then rose with angry face.

The woman stood with gnarly hands on hips,

As broke in epic music from her lips

The swift, unsparing laughter of the race.

* * * * *

Beyond the fenced and many-pastured plain

The sunset rose like minarets of dream.

The bridge across the summer-wasted stream

Roared with the passing of the splendid train.

And from a shining car whose inmates quaffed

Their jewelled wines, a girl with ivory hands

Gazed forth, nor knew that on those very sands,

One sunset-time, her mother's mother laughed.

Eastward she hastened to the roofs of kings,

Her each desire accorded ere 't was felt—

She who had never toiled nor borne nor knelt,

She, tired of life and love and human things.

MENACE

Said the Sea: "The mountains stand
Far and haughty. Rise, O wind!
On their summits you shall find
Chords to master, harps to cry mine ancient message
to the land."

Woke the sea-wind swift and strong,
Lifting pinions broad and sure
Where untrodden sands lay pure,—
Hurling eastward in his passion with the undelivered
song.

Then upon the scornful height
Rose his bidden voice divine
From the organ-breasted pine—
Singing of his master's empire and his slow and
patient might.

MENACE

"He will come, O shafts of stone!

Granite ramparts, he will come!

In a little I am dumb,

But my captain's purpose fails not, tho his ends remain unknown.

Like a mist the pines shall pass,

For the seasons of the rock

Are but seconds of Time's clock,

And the towers you lift shall vanish like a shadow
on the grass.

You shall crumble slowly down

With the rain at chink and flaw;

At your throne a Worm will gnaw,

And the truceless deep, advancing, will reach upward
for your crown.

He will thunder at your wall

Till you bend your knees to him,

MENACE

And in ages far and dim
He will sap your deep foundations and your battle-
ments shall fall.

Tho the time be far away,
He is patient, he is vast,
And the year shall come at last
When his waves on gulfs uncharted roll between you
and the day."

Then the song and sigh were done,
And the messenger fell dead
Where the eagle's young are fed
And at bay the stubborn mountains gaze in silence on
the sun.

THE SECRET ROOM

No sun therein, no beam of star,
Hath use a little in its air;
No hand hath found the hidden bar,
Nor footfall hurt the silence there.

The room is lost, the door is sealed,
The sword upon the wall is rust;
The rayless lamp hangs unrevealed
To midnight and the accepted dust.

No hand remains that holds the key,
Nor is there any sign to tell
Who dreamt therein what could not be,
Nor what the exiled dream befell;

Save that a dead rose evermore
Is parted from the twilight's tears—
Whose petals on the estranging floor
Grow dimmer with the tacit years.

PAST THE PANES

When I was ill, from my low bed
I gazed the little window through
And saw a scanty patch of blue,
Part of the great sky overhead.

And now, grown strong, I climb the hill,
And from my seat so lone and high
I see the wide, majestic sky,
And feel the winds, and look my fill.

But all the clouds of that cool dome,
And all its turquoise far but clear,
Are not so wonderful and dear
As that blue space I watched at home.

O strange! that humble things should be
Of stature more than mountains are,—
The grass diviner than the star,—
A tear-drop deeper than the sea!

FROM THE MOUNTAIN

Let us go home with the sunset on our faces—

 We that went forth at morn,
To follow on the wind's auroral paces,
 And find the desert bourn
The frontier of our hope and Heaven's scorn.

Let us go home with the sunset on our faces—

 We that have wandered far
And stood by noon in high, disastrous places,
 And known what mountains are
Between those eyries and the morning star.

Let us go home with the sunset on our faces:

 Altho we have not found
The pathway to the inviolable spaces,
 We see from holy ground
An ocean far below without a sound.

DISCORD

Where needles of the pine were strewn,
 I lay one autumn night at ease,
And saw the slowly rising moon,
 A golden thistle through the trees.

And there a stream departing broke
 The forest-silence grave and deep,
In murmurs like a wind that woke,
 Or children restless in their sleep.

The year's first sigh was on the air,
 And acquiescent to its grief,
My heart seemed sad enough to spare
 Regret for every fallen leaf.

DISCORD

Ah! soft my mood and meet for tears,
As wanton Nature in her whim
Made Earth a sister to the spheres
And garden of the seraphim.

And then, the soundless waft of wings!
And on a barren branch above,
An owl, the gnome of feathered things,
Broke at a glance my dream of love.

Poor thrush that sang as daylight fled!
So songless now, so mutely meek!
Lo! the squat fury bent his head,
And tore her breast with avid beak!

LINEAGE

As sound is not, except an ear apprise,
Nor light, save when recording eyes attend,
So in the mind hath beauty birth and end,
Nor station in Time's aspect otherwise.
Between thy brows are Music's farthest skies,
And from thy seats of dream her wings ascend.
No fragrance is, unless thy spirit lend,
And of thyself the morning hath its dyes.

Now blooms the mystic flower: what Hand hath
sown?

Now gleam its iris-hues: what Breath hath blown
The bubble beauty risen from thy brain,
And as a mirror evident of thee?
Gaze: let the glass distort thy dust in vain!
Behold thyself—thyself a mystery!

TO ONE SELF-SLAIN

The door thou chosest, gave it on the night?

Ever we ask of whoso openeth

If day or darkness hold the seats of Death;

But if the heavy-lidded dead have sight

Their mouths are loyal to that alien light:

Amid the Innumerable no one saith

What waited on the passing of the breath—

Spend not your own: the grave will not requite.

Phantoms and whispers reach us from the dark—

Mirages vain, mendacities august

That are but of the living, not the dead.

Nay! tho I hunger, I in no wise hark

The fleeting music scattered with thy dust,

Nor call thy shadow from the House of Dread.

NIGHT ON THE MOUNTAIN

The fog has risen from the sea and crowned
The dark, untrodden summits of the coast,
Where roams a voice, in canyons uttermost,
From midnight waters vibrant and profound.
High on each granite altar dies the sound,
Deep as the trampling of an armored host,
Lone as the lamentation of a ghost,
Sad as the diapason of the drowned.

The mountain seems no more a soulless thing,
But rather as a shape of ancient fear,
In darkness and the winds of Chaos born
Amid the lordless heavens' thundering—
A Presence crouched, enormous and austere,
Before whose feet the mighty waters mourn.

THE ABANDONED FARM

The moon was large across the hills
Amid whose fields I wandered lost,
And cold her pearl upon the rills—
From wave to wave in music tost.

Far in among untended slopes,
Vacant of trees, the valley wound.
I saw no light to raise my hopes,
Nor heard, save of the stream, a sound.

A voiceless region, weird and bare,
Whose roads were held by briar and weed,
Covert for mouse and aspen hare
When the red hawk and owlet feed.

THE ABANDONED FARM

And then, a house! So still it lay!
Still as the moon that overhead
In silence took her crystal way.
A house can die, like men, 'tis said;

And this lay dead and desolate.
How tell the pathos of the scene—
The hush of things inanimate,
The moonlight, sad, immense, serene?

What should I term it, house or tomb?
Now all was over. Now the dust
Lay thick in each deserted room.
The latch was given to the rust.

Sere on the threshold lay the leaves;
Hopeless and blank the windows stared,
Like eyes of one who sits and grieves
In hours remorseful and unshared.

THE ABANDONED FARM

In what near night or distant dawn
Were now the dwellers? Lived they still,
They who so many times had drawn
Before the hearthstone or the sill?

Lived it in other hearts, that home?—
Remembered very far away,
Where snowy plains, or whiter foam,
Or tropic cities knew the day.

Still hung the frozen moon above
The roof where song and tears had been,—
Where birth and death and toil and love
Had once their ancient way with men.

Chill and forlorn the wintry gleam
Of moonlight flooding all the space.
The age-long murmur of the stream
Made lonelier the hour and place.

TO H. G. WELLS

(With "The House of Orchids")

Here in this emerald inlet, with the blue Pacific to
westward,
A tiny nautilus rides, and there! and there! are twain
others,
Drifting in to the beach, where the lessened wave is
broken
On clear chalcedony pebbles and gleams of the
haliotis.
But there, afar on the sky-line, are ships that pass to
the Islands,
Under the sun and moon, with the salt of the sea on
their cordage.
Staunch and patient and happy, with pilot stars on
their pathway,
Wise of the gales they fare, to men of another plow-
ing. . . .

TO H. G. WELLS

Symbol, those and these, of Time's wide sea and our
dreamings,—

Of me with foam in my hands, and you with the
human rubies.

Yet, look once at my bubbles, for I keep your gems
in my bosom;

And soon we are sand of the beach—a little, O
friend! but a little,

Ere my nautilus touch the shore, and your sails are
below the horizon.

CAELI ENARRANT

Oh! marvellous the skies
Ere sunset close
Its rich, enormous rose,
Or dawn, too late,
Seem a supernal gate
That opens into midmost Paradise!

And yet more fair and strange
The silent dome
Of midnight's vigilled home,
Where star and star
The silent sentries are
Of ramparts built beyond the reach of change.

CAELI ENARRANT

A thousand years from hence
 Could I again
Within the House of Pain
 Stand forth and see,
Their solemn legionry
Were stationed in the Vast's circumference.

In governed ranks unstirred
 Shall they abide,
In panoply and pride
 Of guarding flame—
The watchword still the same
And changeless still their battle-song unheard.

But man how changed, I dream!
 At last, at last,
Made wiser by the past,
 Shall not he cease
From deeds that mar his peace,
And human Brotherhood be found supreme?

CAELI ENARRANT

Shall not the nations laugh,
And in their joy
War's crimson fane destroy,
And love assoil
The darker stains of toil—
Burning dead laws and sophistries like chaff?

Oh! by the years made wise,
Let man forego
Joy from his brother's woe,
Till o'er the mirth
Of our transfigured earth
The stars shall beam as once o'er Paradise!

"YOU NEVER CAN TELL"

Spindrift and bilge and the world turns over!
What is the dross and what the gold?
The snake and the lark ha' nests in the clover,
And which is best when the tale is told?

Thrice I sinned—oh! the heavens' joyance!
Breasts angelic shook wi' the joke;
Once did good—oh! earth's annoyance!
Hell to pay and the bank gone broke!

James drank poison at love's derision;
John swigged ale and swank in the sun,
Throve, and came to a dark decision,
And, "Christ! that I were the other one!"

"YOU NEVER CAN TELL"

Seth in the swamp and Dan on the mountain—

Either dreamt that he chose his times:

Dan bent young to a fevered fountain;

Seth grew old by the older slimes.

The stolen dollar in Larry's pocket

Turned a bullet to Harry's side—

It missed by a hair his mother's locket:

The thief lives yet and the good man died.

Justice! Justice! where is thy palace,

Hope o' the planet's dark romance?

Whose is the blood in thy broken chalice,

Slave o' chance? But there is no chance!

DAWN FROM A WESTERN MOUNTAIN

'Twas but a breath ago when ceast
The vibrant moon-flame on the sea,
And now the starry chariots flee
And splendors flood the silent east.

Now, as their wings uplifted gleam
Where sank the standards of the night,
The seven seraphim of light
Bear witness to the Light supreme.

O solemn glories! Rose of fire
And lilies of celestial gold
Their hands shall gather and withhold
To strew upon the sunset-pyre!

DAWN FROM A WESTERN MOUNTAIN

What service lies upon the ray!
Now seem the skies the home of God
And earth the Garden where He trod,
Familiar, in the cool of day.

O lone and still! Yet far below
The plush of meadows zoned by dawn
Is trodden by the spotted fawn,
And birds are happy there, I know.

Beauty seems all our eyes may scan;
Yet far away, within those walls
Where now the blessed sunlight falls,
They hang this hour a fellow-man.

THE SETTING

How vast and marvellous a stage was set,
Man, for thy drama! Who the play begot
And whether it be tragedy or not,
Ending in darkness, we may know not yet,
Nor whether, on the heavenly parapet,
An Audience be mindful of the plot—
Sure at the last to hasten from the spot
With laughter, or with eyes thy fate hath wet.

Nathless immensities attend thy way,
Whether it lead to rapture, sleep or woe:
The mountains and the sun await thy years,
Confronting still thy triumph or dismay,
And seas foremoaning all thy heart must know,
And stars whose light shall glisten in thy tears.

THE SLEEPERS

Tho weak the wintry sunlight beam,
The slumbering flowers begin to dream.
Far south, and very faintly, sing
The announcing angels of the Spring.

Tho muffling snows be drifted deep,
Forgotten voices cross their sleep;
Soon, to the rain's release and fall,
They shall awaken, and recall.

Ears have they not, yet shall they hear
The vernal trumpets ringing clear;
They have not eyes, and yet shall see
The road to Spring's nativity.

THE SLEEPERS

Seems it not true a subtler Light
Bestows on them the boon of sight,
Since they, whom mortals reckon blind,
A wiser way than mortals find?—

The path to Nature's large repose,
Where poppy, lilac, lupin, rose
In beauty and in silence wait
The fortunes of their meek estate.

THE SLEEP OF BIRDS

Where canyon-waters dimly fall or creep,—
Where fields are still, or down the mournful coast,
They cease from singing, and above their sleep
Wheel the wild moon and half the starry host.

Linnet and gull, the dove and fluting thrush,
Are silent in the reaccepted dark;
The patient eagles drowse within the hush,
And evening grasses hide the dreamless lark.

Surely the night seems long, the morrow far,
Until the eternal fountains foam anew,
And mad with day they see the morning star
Linger in light, ere splendors touch the dew.

THE SLEEP OF BIRDS

Ere man had faith, theirs were the bonds of trust
Between their weakness and a Power withdrawn:
The wind of wings, the midnight talon-thrust—
Knowing of those they slumber till the dawn!

But we how often, fugitives of care,
Awaken when the night is loud or dumb,
And see the solemn altars of despair,
And dread the dark, and dread the day to come!

SPRING IN MONTEREY

A hundred fisher boats are out on the bay;
The breakers flash, and the lazy sea-gulls sway,
A-perch on the tethered raft and the dipping prow;
And a cloud is white on the farthest mountain's brow.

Under our ancient oaks the turf is green,
And hoarding poppies hold their priceless sheen;
Up in the pasture-lands their golden lines
Pause at the sullen emerald of the pines.

Halcyon days are now, and a spell on ocean and
earth;
Tranquil spaces and deeds and a share in the cosmic
mirth.
And oh! to feel, in the shadowed days to be,
The light from the sun and the living wind from the
sea!

SPRING IN MONTEREY

And oh! to feel the joy in the blackbird's breast,
A-tinkle over the rushes that hide the nest!
O bridals free! O lonely mating of birds!
O gentle music given in place of words!

Listen awhile, ere the noontide hush the strain,
Or the lark on her eggs lie meek to the vestal rain.
Cast your care on the way that the sea-mist went,
And draw the Spring to the heart in a sigh of content.

THE LAST DAYS

The russet leaves of the sycamore
Lie at last on the valley floor—
By the autumn wind swept to and fro
Like ghosts in a tale of long ago.
Shallow and clear the Carmel glides
Where the willows droop on its vine-walled sides.

The bracken-rust is red on the hill;
The pines stand brooding, somber and still;
Grey are the cliffs, and the waters grey,
Where the seagulls dip to the sea-born spray.
Sad November, lady of rain,
Sends the goose-wedge over again.

THE LAST DAYS

Wilder now, for the verdure's birth,
Falls the sunlight over the earth;
Killdees call from the fields where now
The banding blackbirds follow the plow;
Rustling poplar and brittle weed
Whisper low to the river-reed.

Days departing linger and sigh;
Stars come soon to the quiet sky;
Buried voices, intimate, strange,
Cry to body and soul of Change;
Beauty, eternal fugitive,
Seeks the home that we cannot give.

NATURAL HISTORY ITEMS

FATHER COYOTE

At twilight time, when the lamps are lit,
Father coyote comes to sit
At the chapparal's edge, on the mountain-side—
Comes to listen and to deride
The rancher's hound and the rancher's son,
The passer-by and everyone.
And we pause at milking-time to hear
His reckless carolling, shrill and clear,—
His terse and swift and valorous troll,
Ribald, rollicking, scornful, droll,
As one might sing in coyotedom:
“Yo ho ho and a bottle of rum !”

Yet well I wot there is little ease
Where the turkeys roost in the almond trees,

FATHER COYOTE

But mute forebodings, canny and grim,
As they shift and shiver along the limb.
And the dog flings back an answer brief
(Curse o' the honest man on the thief),
And the cat, till now intent to rove,
Stalks to her lair by the kitchen stove;
Not that *she* fears the rogue on the hill;
But—no mice remain, and—the night is chill.
And now, like a watchman of the skies,
Whose glance to a thousand valleys flies,
The moon glares over the granite ledge—
Pared a slice on its upper edge.
And father coyote waits no more,
Knowing that down on the valley floor,
In a sandy nook all cool and white,
The rabbits play and the rabbits fight,
Flopping, nimble, skurrying,
Careless now with the surge of Spring. . . .
Furry lover, alack! alas!
Skims your fate o'er the moonlit grass!

THE LAGOON

Where Carmel River nears the sea
The surf is loud and high;
There go the gull and heron free
Against the morning sky.

And there the tireless billow heaps
The salt and amber sand,
And rears a bar whose rampart keeps
The river to the land.

Pent in, the baffled waters spread
To one serene lagoon,
A crimson lake ere day is fled,—
A mirror to the moon.

All night the western ocean raves
Below the tacit star;
All night the shock of towering waves
Is on the narrow bar.

THE LAGOON

But close at hand the sea-birds lie
 In refuge from the deep,
And through the dark the rushes sigh
 Where tern and mallard sleep.

Near by the surf casts up its snow
 To tell its large unrest,
But in that placid sky below
 The mirrored stars creep west.

A thousand voices fill the night
 Where cold the waters fall;
Unmoved, they wait the morning light,
 Nor heed that rage at all.

Where Carmel River meets the sea
 The loon a refuge hath;
The sea-bird slumbers quietly
 A stone's throw from that wrath.

RELATIVITY

Said the little grey snipe to his brothers few,
Where the river flows by Martin's farm,
"Stay! the hunting is not for you:
We are too small for man to harm."

And I went past on my way to the geese,
Scarce a rod from the tiny band,
Which moved no feather, but stood in peace
On the verge of the pleasant meadow-land.

But when I had gone came another one,
From the hill where the lupin-pods were ripe.
Small as he was he carried a gun—
Alas! alas! for the little snipe!

And I came back from a fruitless quest,
But another stood in a pine-set cot,
And said, with pride in his glowing breast:
"See, mother, see the big birds I shot!"

THE PLAINT OF THE COTTON-TAILS

Deem it not strange that we, the small,
Are timorous of earth,
And fail to find existence all
A thing of thoughtless mirth:
Now, as the cloudy sunset wanes,
The lean coyote prowls,
And on the silent willow-lanes
Come twilight and the owls.

Loving them not, we mostly seek
Near man our habitat,
And thence, in lieu of fang or beak,
Goes forth the prowling cat.
O ye who seem her willing slaves,
That such deceit can be!
It is not mice the sleek one craves
But our small progeny.

THE PLAINT OF THE COTTON-TAILS

Deem it not strange that we should sigh

Rabbinical "Alas!"

The tilting hawk is on the sky,

The bull-snake in the grass.

What of man's little love, they too

Incur his hostile powers;

But where can other creatures view

A nursery like ours?

Our direst foe we name the last,

And him we daily name.

Of him coyotes stand aghast;

For him the cat is tame;

For him we run with stinging flanks,

Or die at set of sun:

O peril of our thinning ranks—

The small boy with a gun!

It is our common lot to bide

By the blackberry walls,

THE PLAIN OF THE COTTON-TAILS

Or where along the riverside
The thrush ere twilight calls.
It is our common lot to wait
Too long by but a breath;
Then speaks, abrupt, the urchin Fate:
A bang, a kick—and death!

A POSSIBILITY

On a windy day, in the russet reeds
Where the blackbird swings and the mallard feeds,
I hid me well, lest the setting sun
Gleam for an instant on my gun;
Quietly there would I ambush me
Till the whirring ducks came in from the sea.
And there as I listened, hushed, intent,
To the din of the marsh-wrens' argument,
A great blue heron, stately, grand,
Tired of the mice in the meadow-land,
Hungry, perchance, for the frogs in the sedge,
Came and stood at the river-edge—
Stood alert, with an roving eye,
Wary of river and reeds and sky.

A POSSIBILITY

He saw me not, tho soon for a jest
I took long aim at his lilac breast,
Till some alarm of a subtler sense
Leapt in his heart, and he hurried thence,
With dripping feet and with broad wings spread—
A mote at last where the west was red.
And I thought: Tho now I seem secure
(An armed man on a friendly moor)—
Tho strong and sure on my ways I go,
Nor find a peril nor wait a foe,
Perchance I stand, this set o' the sun,
At the ruth of a dire and mighty One.
Perchance a Presence is holding now
A sword invisible o'er my brow,
Till, half in scorn of the gnat beneath,
He smiles, and sets it back to the sheath.



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